



EDDIE A. PEREZ
Mayor

CITY OF HARTFORD

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
131 Coventry Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06112
Ph: (860) 543-8860
Fax: (860) 722-6851
www.hartford.gov



CARLOS RIVERA
Director

CITY OF HARTFORD ADDRESSES ROOT CAUSES OF HEALTH INEQUITIES

NEWS AND COMMUNITY RELEASE

February 22, 2010 -- Mayor Eddie A. Perez and the Hartford Department of Health and Human Services introduced the Health Equity Alliance Initiative at Community Health Services today. With a theme of "Health Equity is a Social Justice Issue," Mayor Perez introduced this effort to fight the inequalities in health outcomes that are so prevalent in the Hartford community.

The Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, Inc. (CADH), selected the City of Hartford Health and Human Services Department to be one of three pilot sites for the implementation of the CADH Health Equity Index. The Health Equity Index is a community-based tool that profiles and measures social, political, economic, and environmental conditions that are associated with higher rates of disease, injury, and premature death among particular population groups. This approach goes beyond the current emphasis on health education and individual behaviors that have had little impact on reducing the difference in health status seen in certain communities across the state. The Health Equity Index illuminates the conditions in neighborhoods that are the root causes of poorer health. Additionally, this approach uses a collaborative process that brings public health personnel together with community leaders, municipal department heads, and community-based organizations to address health inequities.

"Equality in health is a social justice issue and we must fight to right this wrong. I am in full support of this effort by the Department of Health and Human Services to advance health equity in our City and to improve the overall wellness of Hartford residents," stated Mayor Perez.

"Almost every modern social problem--- disease, violence, lack of community life, teen pregnancy, and mental illness --- is more likely to occur in a less equal society. The Health Equity Index will be used to document disparities that Hartford residents face in their everyday lives," stated Carlos Rivera, Director of the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services.

"In a community health center such as CHS we deal with the inequities in health on a daily basis. We understand in a very profound way that health is not only a product of good medical care, genes and lifestyle and that living a long and productive life is directly influenced by social factors like education, income, safety in the neighborhoods to name a few," stated Michael Sherman, Chief Executive Officer of Community Health Services.

Two local community leaders, Ms. Sharon Lewis of the Northeast neighborhood and Ms. Jasmin Alars Feliciano of Frog Hollow, stressed the need to address these conditions by sharing of their own personal experiences.

This initiative is made possible through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Health Equity Alliance (HEA), an initiative of CADH, will be providing technical assistance to the City of Hartford with implementation of the Index, workforce development, and engaging the community in dialogue on health inequities and their root causes.

For more information please contact Rita Kornblum, Program Manager at (860) 547-1426 ext: 7188 or rkornblum@hartford.gov

